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Rib Mountain

Thank you for taking the time to read our GT newsletter. We are working very hard to improve communication with our families, and this newsletter has become an efficient way to share information with our stakeholders. Please feel free to share any ideas YOU may have by emailing krpeterso@wausauschools.org. If it's information important to you, chances are very good that it would be meaningful to other parents as well.

GT Coordinator Corner

The Wausau School District Gifted and Talented Department's work is guided by two district-level committees: GT Advisory Committee (meets 3x annually) and GT Identification Committee (meets 2x annually). The job of the GT Identification Committee is twofold: *Revise and update as needed the guidelines used to identify gifted students and ensure that we're doing our best to identify all students in the Wausau School District.* This committee is comprised of members of the District Education Department, the District Gifted and Talented Department, and a school psychologist.

The job of the GT Advisory Committee is to provide multiple-perspectives through a variety of lenses to ensure that we're doing our best to meet the needs of our students K-12. This committee is a much larger body of individuals that changes depending upon the work to be completed. For example, when the task was to create a GT Music Experience, the teachers invited were primarily music educators. When the task was the alignment of K-12 Mathematics, the core teachers invited to attend were mathematics instructors. These core teachers are then complemented by a diverse group of others who serve as regular advisory representatives, bringing a variety of perspectives to any issue: *Parents, school board member, community members, administrators, school counselor, and other specialists (ex. reading and math).*

The first GT Advisory Meeting of the year took place on Friday, November 16, 2018. The focus of our first meeting was to meet on leveled teams (elementary, middle and high) and to review a **Draft of a 5 Year Strategic Plan**. This work was quite labor intensive but very important as it will help us create a roadmap for future work.

We have 6 goals that were the topics of discussion:

- ~1. Identification Process/Identify Opportunities for Students/Equity
- ~2. Education/Professional Development
- ~3. Curriculum/Co-Curricular
- ~4. Resources
- ~5. Staffing
- ~6. Assessment/Progress Monitoring

Teams shared their perspectives and ideas, and those revisions will be brought back to our advisory during our second meeting of the year, Monday, February 18, 2019.

On behalf of the Gifted and Talented Department, we appreciate the time, energy and commitment made by each and every team member participating because this strategic plan is the work of the entire GT Advisory Committee, not just that of the GT Department. This work could not happen without the collective voices of all. Thanks so very much!

-Tammy Steckbauer, GT Coordinator

Middle School Spelling Bee Results

Horace Mann - On Wednesday, January 16th, the school-wide spelling took place in the Large Group Room. Out of the entire school, 29 students qualified for the bee, and of those, only 19 students had the courage to accept the challenge to compete.

It was un-BEE-lievable: 1 hour and 30 minutes and 198 words later, the winner emerged: 7th grader Jesse N. was crowned champion after spelling the word "phalanx."

1st runner up was 6th grader Parker H., and 2nd runner up was 8th grader Talia B.

Congratulations to everyone who participated and special thanks to Judge Ms. Dimka and Recordkeeper Ms. Lehman.

On January 31st, our top three finishers will represent the Eagles at the Regional Spelling Bee where they will compete against top spellers from John Muir, DCE Everest, and Merrill Middle Schools.

Good luck Jesse, Parker, and Talia!

John Muir - On Thursday, January 10 the school-wide spelling took place in the Large Group Room. Out of the entire school, 49 students qualified for the bee, and of those, only 12 students had the courage to accept the challenge to compete.

It was un-BEE-lievable: 1 hour and 30 minutes and 141 words later, the winner emerged: 6th grader Abby K. was crowned champion after spelling the word "irked."

1st runner up was 7th grader Olivia W., and 2nd runner up was 7th grader Beckett W.

Congratulations to everyone who participated and special thanks to Ms. Lang who helped judge the bee and coached Mr. Boller through his first spelling bee.

On January 31st, Abby, Olivia, and Beckett will represent the Highlanders at the Regional Spelling Bee where they will compete against the top spellers from Horace Mann, DCE Everest, and Merrill Middle Schools.

Good luck Abby, Olivia, and Beckett!

Parent Resources

Here are some articles based on the worries, concerns, and challenges addressed at the parent meeting:

[Emotional Health](#)

[Byrdseed](#) - This is Ian Byrd's Parenting page. He is a well known and respected authority on gifted students. Parents can sign up to receive his free emails from this link along with links to other parenting resources from this page.

[Neuroscience for Kids](#) -

For the student who is interested in the brain - a fun website for kids to explore

5th Grade WAVE Students



Fifth grade WAVE students participated in a math collaboration day at Rib Mountain Elementary School on December 19. The purpose of this event was to allow for deeper level thinking and a hands-on learning experience. It was amazing to see the quick friendships that formed and the excitement as they shared their love of math and learning. A special thank you to Daren Catlin, District Math Coordinator, Cheryl Borta, GT Learning Resource Teacher, and Carrie Clement, Math Teacher at John Muir for taking time to help plan and run this event.

Art Cluster Summary 2019

Eighty fourth graders and eighty fifth graders attended the four-day WSD Elementary Gifted and Talented (GT) Art Cluster held on January 8-11, 2019. The GT Art Cluster is designed to bring together some of our most talented fourth and fifth grade artists from across the district for four days of intensive artistic training. The sessions were held at the Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum and the Boys and Girls Club of Wausau. The students viewed the exhibit "Victor Vasarely: Op Art Master" on January 8th. They spent the next 3 days at the Boys & Girls Club creating their own op art masterpieces that will be on display at the Marathon County Public Library starting March 2. They will remain on display through mid March. Thank you to the staff at the LYWAM and the Boys & Girls Club. A special thank you to the Art Cluster teachers: Jennah Guyer, Rebekah Anderson, Kelley Schmidt and Steve Loftus.



Stettin Author Visit

The Fourth and Fifth graders at Stettin Elementary welcomed author Jennifer Ross to open their GT-Creative Writing unit. Ms. Ross shared her journey to becoming a published author. She also shared how she uses literary devices in her writing to keep readers engaged.

It was an amazing experience. We look forward to her visits as "guest editor" during this unit where she will help the students fine tune their writing. Our writing unit is based on illustrations from the book, [The Mysteries of Harris Burdick](#) by Chris Van Allsburg.

